



Development of the “Optimism Bridge” Game Based on Learned Optimism from an Islamic Educational Perspective: A Design and Validation Study

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Abstract

21st-century Islamic education demands mastery of non-cognitive spiritual competencies, such as optimism (Husnuzan and Raja'), to mitigate adolescent mental health crises and academic anxiety (qalaq). Theologically anchored in QS. Az-Zumar: 53, QS. Al-Baqarah: 286, and QS. Al-Insyirah verses 5–6, optimism represents a mandatory spiritual-cognitive stance. However, school counseling and Islamic moral nurturing (Tarbiyah Akhlak) remain dominated by conventional, passive-verbalistic methods that trigger student boredom. This study aims to develop a block-based board game, Optimism Bridge, to foster an optimistic attitude among Junior High School (SMP) students through an Islamic-integrated cognitive restructuring process. Using the Research and Development (R&D) method with the 4D model limited to the Development stage, this study involved 20 grade IX-C students at SMP Negeri 42 Medan, two expert validators, and a field practitioner. Data collected via Likert and Guttman questionnaires were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively. The results indicate that the media is highly feasible based on validation by media experts (84.00%) and material experts (94.70%), and is highly practical based on responses from counselors (97.50%) and students (84.00%). Philosophically, optimism in Islamic counseling is a cognitive-spiritual skill (Amal Qalbi) intervened through experiential activities. The findings confirm that integrating Seligman's ABCDE Model and Islamic theological values (Raja'-Ikhtiar-Tawakal) into game mechanics effectively facilitates students' disputation abilities (Mujahadah an-Nafs) against negative emotions and desperate thoughts (Waswas). With implications for a global audience, this study expands Islamic game-based learning by showing that concrete visualization shifts the school counseling paradigm from passive doctrine to an emancipatory internalization of positive divine awareness.

Keywords: ABCDE Model, Group Guidance, Game-Based Learning, Learned Optimism, Research and Development.

Introduction

Globally, 21st-century education positions non-cognitive competencies, including optimism, as crucial determinants of students' academic success and psychological well-being. International discourse emphasizes optimism as a dynamic construct that protects students from academic stress and failure (Maryam & Chusnah, 2025). The global escalation of mental health problems and decreased student engagement due to complex curricula are also indicated at the local level in junior high school students in Medan City who are vulnerable to anxiety and reduced academic engagement (R. K. Putri et al., 2025). In fact, interviews at SMP Negeri 42 Medan confirmed that students tend to think negatively, lack self-confidence, and give up easily due to conventional tutoring services. However, students with high optimism have better student engagement (Nabilah et al., 2025), and a student-centered approach has been proven effective in increasing their engagement (Karimah et al., 2025). Theoretically, Seligman's concept of Learned Optimism offers a framework that optimism can be learned through the

ABCDE Model (Munaris et al., 2022). This high-quality learning has a significant impact on academic achievement (A. Rahmaeni M et al., 2025) and is closely related to students' academic self-efficacy (Ratnawati et al., 2020). In the Indonesian context, the internalization of this positive psychology is coherent with the theological foundations of Islam. Imam Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulumuddin* emphasized the prohibition of despair because God's mercy surpasses all the difficulties of creatures (Pasaribu, 2024) .

The theological foundation of this optimistic attitude is explicitly stated in the Qur'an, Surah Az-Zumar, verse 53:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Meaning: "Say, O My servants who go beyond the limits of themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed, Allah forgives everyone's sins." (QS. Az-Zumar: 53)

Tafsir Al-Muyassar explains that this verse is a divine call to all sinful servants not to despair of the forgiveness and mercy of the Almighty Allah, because despair itself is contrary to the essence of faith (Al-Quran Kementerian Agama, 2019).

This principle of resilience and active optimism is reaffirmed in QS. Al-Insyirah verses 5–6:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Meaning: "So indeed with difficulty there is ease, indeed with difficulty there is ease." (QS. Al-Insyirah: 5–6)

According to Ibn Kathir's interpretation, the repetition of the word "ease" in both verses suggests that the ease is dual and definite, while the difficulty in question is singular and temporary. In line with this, the dimension of limiting trials to human capacity is emphasized in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 286:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Meaning: "Allah does not burden a person but according to his ability." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 286)

Buya Hamka's Al-Azhar commentary explains that this verse contains a message of pragmatic optimism, as every test is tailored to the capacity of His servants (Hamka, 1983). The integration of these three verses forms the theological foundation of active optimism, (Musleh, 2025). which, in Al-Ghazali's view, manifests itself in an attitude of hope (*raja'*) and real effort (*ikhtiar*). The relationship between optimism, gratitude, and subjective well-being has been shown to be mutually reinforcing in adolescents (Masyhuri et al., 2025). and has a positive correlation with students' adversity quotient.(Budiarti & Nastiti, 2026) . Stimulating this mindset requires game-based learning because it can increase motivation (T. E. Putri et al.,

2024), supported by adequate learning facilities (Rahmadani et al., 2024), and 21st-century learning tools (Alghiffari et al., 2024). Educational games based on psychological theory have the potential to be a means of behavioral intervention (Hakeu et al., 2023). while developing non-cognitive competencies (Subroto et al., 2024). Previous studies have discussed group games for emotional regulation (Ratnawati et al., 2020). and simulation games for increasing motivation (Fadilah, 2022), but none have fully integrated the five stages of Seligman's ABCDE Model into the gameplay mechanism of group guidance services. This research gap justifies this research.

The novelty of this research lies in the methodological insight into the design of Optimism Bridge, a block-based board game that translates the ABCDE stages (Adversity, Belief, Consequence, Disputation, Energization) into a concrete game. The experiential process is reinforced by a tiered reward system of regular and gold blocks to facilitate the empirical formation of an optimistic mindset. This study aims to analyze development needs, describe formal development procedures, and test the feasibility and practicality of the Optimism Bridge media based on assessments by material experts, media experts, guidance and counseling practitioners, and students as end users.

Literature review

The Construct of Learned Optimism and the Urgency of Adolescent Resilience

The concept of Learned Optimism, introduced by Martin Seligman, views optimism not as a static, innate trait but as a dynamic cognitive skill that can be learned by restructuring an individual's attributional style when faced with failure. This framework is operationalized through the ABCDE Model (Adversity, Belief, Consequence, Disputation, and Energization), which aims to break the chain of negative automatic thoughts. At the global level, strengthening these non-cognitive competencies is a crucial determinant in mitigating the escalation of the adolescent mental health crisis due to the increasingly complex demands of 21st-century education. Contemporary investigations by Maryam & Chusnah (2025) have shown that optimism plays a significant role in improving adolescents' psychological well-being and strengthening their ability to cope with stressful situations. At the secondary school level, low optimism has been shown to directly correlate with increased anxiety, decreased motivation, and reduced academic engagement. Conversely, (Budiarti & Nastiti, 2026) found a strong positive relationship between optimism and adversity quotient, while (Masyhuri et al., 2025). showing that optimism, gratitude, and subjective well-being in adolescents are mutually reinforcing psychological elements.

In the context of education in Indonesia, positive psychology has strong theological coherence from an Islamic perspective. Imam Al-Ghazali's concept of active hope (raja') emphasizes that true optimism must be accompanied by real effort (ikhtiar). This aligns with the principle of rejecting despair in QS. Az-Zumar verse 53 promises certainty of multiple solutions after obstacles in QS. Al-Insyirah verses 5–6, as well as the belief in limiting tests according to the capacity of His servants in the QS. Al-Baqarah verse 286 (Al-Quran Kementerian Agama, 2019; Hamka, 1983).

The Effectiveness of Game-Based Learning in Group Guidance Services

Practical applications to stimulate an optimistic mindset in junior high school students require intervention media relevant to their developmental characteristics, including game-based learning methods. This approach facilitates the internalization of abstract concepts through concrete activities and direct experience (experiential learning) (T. E. Putri et al., 2024). This study proves that game-based media can increase learning motivation through measurable challenges and feedback. Furthermore, Subroto et al. (2024) demonstrate the great potential of game-based learning in adaptively developing junior high school students' non-cognitive competencies.

In the realm of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services, (Ratnawati et al., 2020). studies have found that group games effectively improve students' emotional regulation and positive attitudes. This finding is reinforced by studies (Fadilah, 2022). that concluded that group guidance integrated with simulation game techniques can boost student engagement in a fun way while simultaneously reducing the boredom of conventional lecture methods.

Research method

This study applies the Research and Development (R&D) method by adapting the 4D development model (Define, Design, Develop, Disseminate) initiated by Thiagarajan. Based on the classification of R&D research levels, this study is categorized at Level 1, namely research focused on designing theoretically and practically tested products through validity and practicality, without involving effectiveness testing through experimental procedures (Sugiyono, 2013). Development research is a type of research that aims to produce products, concepts, methods, tools, programs or ways that can help simplify and overcome problems faced by humans.(R. S. Putri & Firman, 2024) . Therefore, the development stage in this research is limited to the development stage (feasibility and practicality testing), while the dissemination stage is not implemented (Muharammah et al., 2024).

The selection of the R&D method is considered the most appropriate to answer this research question because this approach bridges the gap between positive psychology theory and practical application in the field (Sumiati et al., 2024). Through R&D, researchers do not simply describe the phenomenon of low student optimism, but actively manifest the abstract concept of Seligman's Learned Optimism and the ABCDE Model into a concrete intervention instrument in the form of the Optimism Bridge board game media. This method produces more meaningful outputs because the final product is developed empirically through structured needs analysis, expert validation, and operational trials.

The development procedure of the Optimism Bridge media was carried out through three interrelated systematic stages, namely the Define, Design, and Develop stages. In the Define stage, activities focused on analyzing media development needs by identifying the psychological characteristics of junior high school students, analyzing the urgency of group guidance services in fostering an optimistic attitude, and analyzing the concept of Learned Optimism with the ABCDE structure as the core substance of the game material. During the Design stage, researchers designed the initial prototype or blueprint of the product, which consisted of a bridge-shaped game board, wooden blocks, gold blocks, situation cards (Adversity), surprise cards (Energization), and a formal guidebook. Additionally, validation questionnaires for material experts, media experts, and user response evaluation instruments

were developed at this stage. Finally, the Develop stage encompassed the physical production process of the media, validation tests by material and media experts, product revisions based on constructive input from validators, and limited trials to measure the empirical practicality of the media in schools.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 42 Medan, located on Jalan Platina III, Titi Papan, Medan Deli District, Medan City, in April 2026. The trial participants in this research were divided into three main groups to evaluate different dimensions of the media: expert validators for theoretical feasibility, field practitioners for operational practicality, and end users for empirical practicality. The expert validation involved one media expert and one material expert, both of whom are expert lecturers in the Islamic Education Guidance and Counseling Study Program and Islamic Counseling Guidance at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) or the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) of UIN North Sumatra. Meanwhile, the field practitioner stage involved one Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher from SMP Negeri 42 Medan, and the end-user group comprised 20 students from class IX-C of SMP Negeri 42 Medan. The sampling technique for end users utilized purposive sampling, where participants were selected based on specific criteria according to Sugiyono (2013), specifically targeting students who obtained low to moderate optimism indicator scores based on pre-survey results and recommendations from the school counselor.

The researchers collected research data using non-test instruments in the form of structured questionnaires designed to measure the feasibility and practicality of the media. The student needs analysis questionnaire employed the Guttman scale with a binary choice of "Yes" or "No" to obtain explicit responses regarding the urgency of media development. Conversely, the expert validation and user response questionnaires used an ordinal Likert scale with a score range of 1–4 to avoid midpoint or neutral bias. To ensure the research findings were meaningful and reliable, the instruments' validity was established through expert judgment for content and logical validity. The statement items were derived deductively from Seligman's ABCDE Model conceptual framework and the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP) learning media suitability standards, and experts reviewed and approved them before distribution.

Quantitative data obtained from expert assessments and user responses were analyzed using quantitative descriptive statistics. The percentage score for the feasibility and practicality of the Optimism Bridge media was calculated using the mathematical formula

$$P = \frac{\sum X}{\sum X_{maks}} \times 100\%$$

where P represents the percentage of feasibility or practicality score, $\sum X$ denotes the total empirical scores obtained from respondent assessments, and $\sum X_{maks}$ signifies the ideal maximum score achievable in the instrument. The percentage results were then converted into qualitative criteria using a five-point scale interpretation to determine the level of product acceptability (Table 1).

Table 1. Media Eligibility Categories

No.	Percentage (%)	Eligibility Category
1	81% – 100%	Very Worthy
2	61% – 80%	Worthy
3	41% – 60%	Quite Decent
4	21% – 40%	Less than worthy
5	0% – 20%	Not feasible

Source: adapted from Sugiyono (2013).

The Optimism Bridge media was declared to have met the requirements for successful development if it obtained a minimum score percentage of $\geq 61\%$, falling into the Feasible or Practical category, across the assessments of material experts, media experts, and user responses, thereby qualifying it as a recommended formal intervention tool in guidance and counseling services.

Given that this research involved human subjects, including students and teachers, all implementation procedures strictly complied with ethical research protocols. The researcher obtained official institutional permission from the authorities of SMP Negeri 42 Medan and formal approval from the university's ethics committee. Before administering the instrument and conducting media trials, all participants received an informed consent form. Participants received a comprehensive explanation of the research objectives, a guarantee of strict anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, ensuring their participation was completely voluntary.

Results

The development of the Optimism Bridge board game media based on Seligman's ABCDE Model through the 4D model is reported chronologically and systematically across the define, design, and develop stages.

Needs Analysis Results

The define stage was implemented by distributing a needs analysis questionnaire to 20 respondents from grade IX-C and conducting in-depth interviews with Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at SMP Negeri 42 Medan. This step aimed to identify the initial profile of students' optimism levels and their preferences for intervention media. Table 2 presents comprehensive data from the student needs analysis results.

Table 2. Results of Student Needs Analysis

No	Assessment Aspects	Number of Grains	Acquisition Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
1	Current state of students' optimistic attitudes	5	81	100	81.00%	Urgently require

2	Understanding the ABCDE stages	4	52	80	65.00%	Need
3	The need for learning media/BK games	5	88	100	88.00%	Urgently require
4	Group learning/game experiences and preferences	6	102	120	85.00%	Urgently require
Amount		20	323	400	80.75%	Urgently require

Based on the data in Table 2, the accumulated empirical score obtained was 323 out of a maximum total score of 400. These results indicate an average percentage value of 80.75%, which is classified into the Very Need category. This finding indicates a high urgency for students to access interactive, engaging, and supportive guidance and counseling services to shift negative mindsets toward more optimistic ones. Specifically, the highest scores were in the need for guidance media and understanding the ABCDE stages. Conversely, the indicator of students' actual optimistic attitude condition scored the lowest. This phenomenon confirms the tendency of students who are vulnerable to giving up (helplessness) and have negative attributions when faced with academic and social problems. These results are reinforced by interview data from guidance and counseling teachers, who emphasized that group guidance implementation so far is still dominated by conventional lecture-based methods, which trigger boredom and reduce active involvement (student engagement).

Optimism Bridge Media Game Product Description (Design Stage)

Empirical data from the definition phase formed the basis for designing a prototype block-based board game called Optimism Bridge. Conceptually, this media translates Seligman's ABCDE Model theoretical formula into structured gameplay. This intervention media was designed collectively for two competitive groups of 4–5 students each. The main activity centers on solving problem cards to arrange block components on a bridge-shaped arena banner towards the finish line.

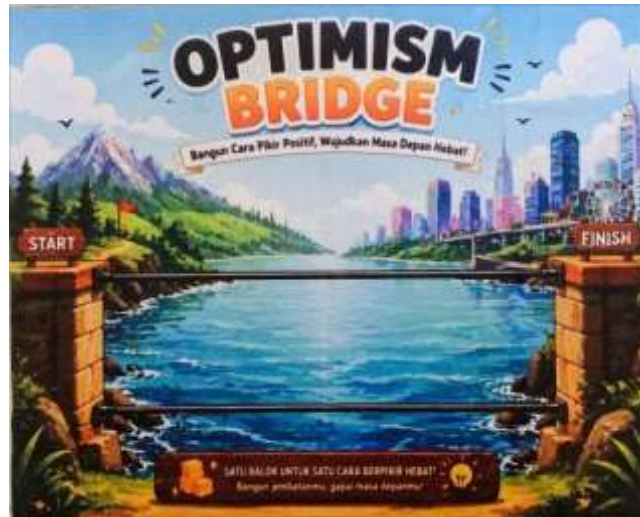
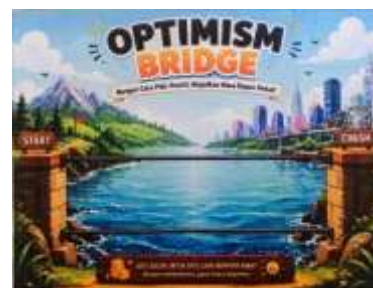


Figure 1. Optimism Bridge Game Media

Operationally, this game is divided into ten integrative procedural stages. The game flow begins with group division and internalization of game regulations, followed by case stimulation in the Adversity phase, perception dismantling in the Belief phase, consequence analysis in the Consequence phase, refutation of destructive arguments in the Disputation phase, and consolidation of concrete actions in the Energization phase. The system rewards the accuracy and precision of students' arguments through a tiered reinforcement system using ordinary wooden blocks and gold blocks. In the Consequence and Disputation phases, a response-speed mechanism (adroit competition) is implemented, where both groups compete to provide the best arguments quickly to stimulate students' cognitive acuity. The game instrument architecture consists of 20 main Optimism Bridge cards with diversified contextual themes covering the domains of family, friendship, and academics. Researchers also randomly insert 5 Mystery cards as a challenge stimulus or external bonus. To support implementation in the field, this media set includes a formal guidebook with regulations, counselor work steps, and student reflection evaluation sheets to ensure the group guidance process runs in a measurable and systematic manner.



a) Game Guide Book



b) Bridge Banner



c) Ordinary Wooden Blocks



d) Gold Block



e) Optimism Bridge Card



f) Mystery Card

Figure 2. Optimism Bridge Game Media Components: (a) Game Guidebook, (b) Bridge Banner, (c) Regular Wooden Blocks, (d) Gold Blocks, (e) *Optimism Bridge Cards*, (f) *Mystery Cards*

The entire sequence of game implementation, starting from preparation orientation, working on card stimuli, calculating points, determining the winner, to the process of filling out the reflection sheet and closing termination, is formulated visually through a systematic process flow chart.

Media Expert Validation Results (Development Stage)

The media expert validation test aimed to evaluate the aesthetic parameters of visual appearance, the quality and durability of raw materials, the clarity of operational guidelines, and the effectiveness of the media's function in group guidance. Table 3 summarizes the media expert assessments.

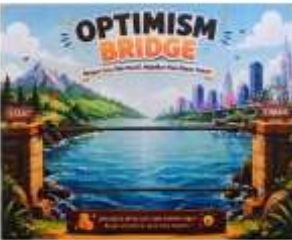
Table 3. Media Expert Validation Results

No	Assessment Aspects	Number of Grains	Acquisition Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
1	Media View	6	19	24	79.16%	Worthy
2	Material Quality and Durability	6	20	24	83.33%	Very Worthy
3	Usage Guide	6	19	24	79.16%	Worthy

4	Ease of Use and Functionality	7	26	28	92.85%	Very Worthy
	Amount	25	84	100	84.00%	Very Worthy

Based on the data in Table 3, the Optimism Bridge media obtained an empirical score of 84 out of a maximum total score of 100 with a feasibility percentage of 84.00%, thus categorized as Very Feasible. The ease of use and functional function parameters received the highest scores (92.85%), indicating that this instrument is highly operationalized. However, the visual appearance and clarity of the draft guideline require optimization because they received the lowest score (79.16%). The media validator's constructive input served as the basis for improving the prototype before proceeding to the user trial stage, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Product Revisions Based on Validator Input

Validator Input	Before Revision	After Revision
<i>Optimism Bridge</i> card colors made brighter so that the writing is clearer and more attractive.		
The play area uses stronger and more durable materials, namely mounted on a styrofoam base.		

The corrective actions presented in Table 4 focused on enhancing usability without changing the game's theoretical content or essential mechanics. This step is crucial to ensuring the media's reliability when distributed in empirically scaled group counseling services.

Material Expert Validation Results (Development Stage) Material expert validation is oriented towards the theoretical accuracy aspects of the Learned Optimism concept, the linearity of the ABCDE Model stages, the suitability for the psychological development of junior high school students, and the practical usefulness of the media. Table 5 presents the material expert assessment results.

Table 5. Results of Material Expert Validation

No	Assessment Aspects	Number of Grains	Acquisition Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
1	Material Conformity with Learned Optimism	8	30	32	93.75%	Very Worthy
2	Suitability of the Implementation of the ABCDE Stages	10	39	40	97.50%	Very Worthy
3	Suitability with Student Characteristics	8	30	32	93.75%	Very Worthy
4	Media Benefits	7	26	28	92.86%	Very Worthy
Amount		33	125	132	94.70%	Very Worthy

Referring to Table 5, the assessment from the material validator shows an empirical score of 125 out of a total ideal score of 132, with a feasibility percentage reaching 94.70% (Very Feasible). The highest achievement was in the suitability indicator for the implementation of the ABCDE stages (97.50%), which provides logical validity evidence that the operational flow of the game successfully integrated all five phases of Seligman's cognitive restructuring as a whole. The material expert provided minor input by refining the diction in the case card narrative to align with the language abilities of junior high school students.

Results of the Teacher and Student Practicality Test (Development Stage)

After undergoing a revision cycle based on the validators' recommendations, the product underwent limited trials to assess its operational practicality. Evaluations were conducted from the perspectives of both field practitioners (guidance and counseling teachers) and end users (students). Table 6 summarizes the guidance and counseling teacher responses.

Table 6. Results of Teacher Practicality Test

No	Assessment Aspects	Number of Grains	Acquisition Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
1	Media View	4	16	16	100%	Very Practical
2	Ease of Use	5	20	20	100%	Very Practical
3	Material Suitability	5	18	20	90.00%	Very Practical
4	Usefulness	6	24	24	100%	Very Practical
Amount		20	78	80	97.50%	Very Practical

The quantitative data in Table 6 demonstrate very high practicality from a practitioner's perspective, with a total score of 78 out of 80 (average percentage of 97.50%, **Very Practical category**). The indicators of aesthetic appearance, technical ease, and intervention usefulness achieved a perfect score (100.00%). This indicates that the *Optimism Bridge media* is ready and feasible for practical use as an alternative innovative instrument in school group guidance service programs.

Student Practicality Test Results (Development Stage) The practicality level of the Optimism Bridge media from the end-user perspective was evaluated by distributing a practicality response questionnaire to 20 Grade IX-C students after the group guidance service simulation was completed. This questionnaire measured students' affective, cognitive, and conative dimensions regarding the use of board game media. Table 7 presents comprehensive data on students' practicality responses.

Table 7. Results of Student Practicality Test

No	Assessment Aspects	Number of Grains	Acquisition Score	Maximum Score	Percentage	Category
1	Interest in Media	2	133	160	83.13%	Very Practical
2	Ease of Use	2	128	160	80.00%	Very Practical
3	Understanding the Material and Stages of the Game	2	134	160	83.75%	Very Practical
4	Developing an Optimistic Attitude	2	140	160	87.50%	Very Practical
5	Spirit and Usefulness	2	137	160	85.62%	Very Practical
Amount		10	672	800	84.00%	Very Practical

Based on the quantitative data in Table 7, students' accumulated empirical scores were 672 out of an ideal maximum of 800. This calculation resulted in an average percentage value of 84.00%, so that the Optimism Bridge media was categorized as Very Practical from the students' perspective. Theoretically, the indicator for developing an optimistic attitude occupied the highest percentage, reaching 87.50%. This finding strongly indicates that the ABCDE Model-based game mechanism can stimulate students' internal awareness and help them restructure their attributional thinking toward a more positive mindset. Conversely, ease of use ranked lowest at 80.00%. Although still within the practical category limit, these results indicate that the regulations and operational instructions for this board game still require special attention from the guidance and counseling teacher when providing initial service orientation to minimize students' technical confusion. During the field experimentation process, students showed a consistent escalation of enthusiasm and active involvement at every stage of the game. Group dynamics were observed to run interactively through intensive group discussions when arranging award blocks and formulating cognitive rebuttals to the problem case cards presented.

Discussion

Dialectics of Intervention Needs and Student Development Characteristics

The initial findings of this study confirm that arranging Guidance and Counseling (BK) services at the local level requires a paradigm shift from conventional verbal methods to experiential learning-based interventions. The urgency of students' needs, which are in the very high category, reflects a manifest gap between the expectations of modern 21st-century curriculum regulations and the actual psychological conditions of students in schools. Symptoms of students' vulnerability to negative thinking and helplessness when facing academic pressure are a local reflection of the global adolescent mental health crisis

phenomenon due to the escalating demands of contemporary education. This relationship strengthens the methodological premise (Sugiyono, 2013) that the efficiency of R&D development products must be firmly rooted in the identification of empirical distortions in the field. The decision to integrate the ABCDE Model into a block-based board game media is based on the need to adapt to the developmental tasks of early adolescence. Psychologically, junior high school students are in a cognitive transition phase towards formal operational thinking. However, in internalizing abstract concepts such as the non-cognitive competence of optimism, they still need concrete activity anchors. This model gives students space to actively practice cognitive restructuring, rather than passively accumulating knowledge. When students move game components, they are simultaneously simulating real problem-solving mechanisms.

Structural Validity and Theoretical-Theological Multidimensional Integration

The high media acceptability coefficient from the validators proves that *Optimism Bridge* meets the requirements of theoretical validity *and* design feasibility. This success stems from the disciplined application of the 4D formal model, where the validation and revision process shifts from a mere formality of assessment to a means of continuous product improvement (Dianti et al., 2021). The highest feasibility parameters achieved in implementing the ABCDE stages provide substantive evidence that this board game instrument successfully translates Martin Seligman's cognitive restructuring concept into the mechanical rules of the game without distorting its scientific essence.

The conceptual integration of the ABCDE Model into the procedures of group guidance services finds a point of convergence that is in line with the theological foundations of Islamic positive psychology as presented in Table 8:

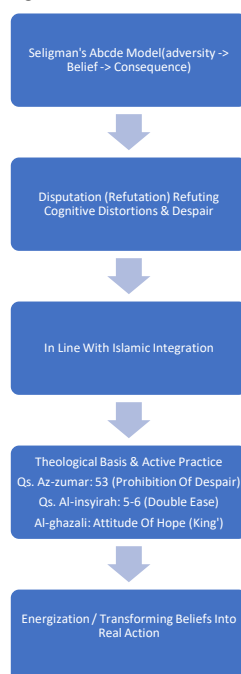


Figure 8. Conceptual integration of the ABCDE Model into guidance service procedures.

The process of *disputation* (refutation) practiced in gameplay intersects theologically with the command to avoid despair in QS. Az-Zumar verse 53 and the belief in the certainty of

multiple solutions after obstacles in QS. Al-Insyirah verses 5-6 (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). When students are forced to practice *disputation* to destroy negative automatic thoughts, they are spiritually practicing the concept of active hope (*raja'*) from the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali. True optimism in Islam is not passive (*wishful thinking*), but must manifest in the *Energization phase*, namely the mobilization of psychological energy into real action (*ikhtiar*) to overcome the limitations of self-capacity as emphasized in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 286 (Hamka, 1983; Musleh, 2025).

Operational Practicality and Comparison of Academic Debates

The high level of operational practicality shows that this medium can break the saturation of conventional group guidance by providing a student-centered learning atmosphere. This finding is consistent with and expands the horizon of research (Fadilah, 2022) suggesting that integrating simulation game techniques into group guidance can trigger a significant surge in learning motivation. Furthermore, data on student enthusiasm and active participation during the problem exploration process supports (Ratnawati et al., 2020) the statement that group game media has a positive immediate impact on emotional regulation, social interaction, and the formation of positive attitudes among students in school.

The fact that developing an optimistic attitude ranked highest in practicality from the students' perspective indicates the successful transfer of insight. This medium successfully facilitated *the Disputation area, the heart of Seligman's Learned Optimism, through adroit competition*. By challenging students to quickly refute cases, the game naturally eroded students' cognitive distortions through a supportive competency scheme.

Although the ease-of-use aspect falls into the very practical category, the minor obstacle of a small number of students needing to repeat the rules indicates that this board game has a certain level of cognitive complexity. This situation requires the guidance counselor, as a facilitator, to skillfully condition the group and visualize the game flow at the beginning of the session to avoid distorting the intervention's timeline.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

The main advantage of the Optimism Bridge media lies in its methodological originality which rigidly combines Seligman's cognitive-theoretical aspects and Islamic affective-theological aspects into a unified group guidance procedure. The tiered award-based competition design (wooden blocks and gold bars) provides an effective extrinsic motivational stimulus for adolescent students, in line with the premise (Fikry et al., 2024) that the presence of visually and mechanically challenging media is positively correlated with the depth of student engagement in instructional activities. However, the generalizability of the findings in this development research is limited by the methodological scope. This study was only conducted at one school locus (SMP Negeri 42 Medan) with limited trial subjects at the micro level (20 students). In addition, the characteristics of Level 1 R&D imply that the effectiveness of this product has not been empirically-clinically tested on increasing students' optimism scores through pre-experimental designs or pure experiments with a control group.

These limitations open up extensive research opportunities in the future. Further research recommendations are directed at scaling up the trial subjects more extensively and

encompassing a diversified range of school characteristics (public, private, and Islamic boarding schools). In light of global digital disruption, it is recommended that this innovation be transformed into a digital version (game-based digital application) to expand accessibility. Finally, the greatest urgency for future researchers is to test the product's effectiveness through formal experimental designs (Quasi-Experimental or Randomized Controlled Trials) to measure the causal impact of media on students' adversity quotient, mental resilience, and academic achievement.

Conclusion

The formal statement and comprehensive evaluation of this study conclude that the board game media Optimism Bridge, based on Seligman's ABCDE Model, has met the criteria of theoretical feasibility and very high operational practicality to be implemented in Guidance and Counseling services for junior high school students. Philosophically, this study proves that optimism is not a static genetic disposition, but rather a cognitive-spiritual skill that can be intervened through the integration of secular cognitive restructuring and Islamic theological values (*raja' ikhtiar*). This finding is in line with and expands the discourse of international educational psychology by manifesting the abstract concept of Learned Optimism and the verses of resilience in the Qur'an (QS. Az-Zumar: 53, QS. Al-Insyirah: 5-6, and QS. Al-Baqarah: 286) into a structured gameplay mechanism, in order to mitigate negative mindsets of adolescents by moving from mere verbal lectures to concrete actions (Energization) that are emancipatory. The main significance of this study confirms that visualizing concrete experiences through supportive competitive group games can transform school counseling into a means of internalizing positive awareness that is adaptive for early adolescent development.

Despite advancing the field of positive psychology in schools, the academic maturity of this study is limited by several limitations, such as the locus and subjects of the trial, which are still micro-scale (20 students at SMP Negeri 42 Medan), so that the results cannot be generalized widely to macro populations with different cultural diversification. In addition, this Level 1 R&D study tests only the product's acceptability and does not measure long-term causal effects on changes in student optimism through an experimental design; it is also limited to conventional physical media formats that are vulnerable to technical obstacles in group conditioning. Based on these limitations, future researchers are advised to validate these findings more robustly by conducting clinical effectiveness tests through pure experimental designs (Quasi-Experimental or Randomized Controlled Trials), expanding sample escalation to various school characteristics (such as madrasahs or Islamic boarding schools), and carrying out digital transformation into a mobile app to expand the accessibility of independent psychological interventions without physical space barriers.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest with any party in the conduct of the research, data analysis, or preparation of this paper. The entire process of developing the Optimism Bridge media and collecting data was conducted objectively to advance knowledge in the field of guidance and counseling.

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